

Philosophy 204: History of Modern Western Philosophy (2623)

Fall 2016

MW 2:00 – 3:15 LA1 304

Professor Marcy P. Lascano

Office: MHB 901

Office Hours: Mondays 3:30-5:30 and by appointment

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Course Description

This course is a survey of early modern philosophers covering philosophers from the 17th and 18th centuries. We will concentrate on issues in metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of religion, and moral philosophy broadly construed.

Course Learning Outcomes

Students will become familiar with the history of western philosophical thought, gain experience reading philosophical texts, learn to extract, explain, and critically evaluate arguments within the text, gain facility in writing philosophical essays and exams, and learn basic research skills.

Course Requirements

Exams, Research Project, and Participation

Examinations (60%): There will be three short take-home examinations in the course. Each exam will ask you to answer two questions and will be no more than three pages long. Each examination is worth 100 points, and all together they are worth 60% of your course grade.

Research Project (20%): The research project is a multi-part assignment which will involve each student writing a short encyclopedia entry on a “non-canonical” figure in the history of philosophy that is not covered in this course. Students will write a short biography, bibliography, an explanation of a portion of their philosophical views, and a critical analysis of the view. Information concerning the Research Project can be found below and in the “Assignments” area of Beachboard. There are several components to the project that will be graded, and the total project is worth 100 points (20% of the course grade).

Class Participation (20%): For each day’s reading, I will post two response questions. Each student should write up a paragraph, outline, or argument answering each question before the beginning of class. Before each class period I will randomly select two students to present their answers at some point during our class discussion. These two students will need to turn in their written answers as well. **If you are selected and are not in class that day, your class participation grade will go down one letter grade unless you provide documentation of a University approved excused absence (see definition below).**

Missed Work:

In this course, documentation is required for each excused absence. If you have a documented excused absence, notify the professor immediately. How work will be made up will be decided on a case-by-case basis.

University policy on EXCUSED ABSENCES:

1. Illness or injury to the student.
2. Death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like.
3. Religious reasons (California Education Code section 89320).
4. Jury duty or government obligation.

University sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips).

General Policies

Special Accommodations:

If any student requires special accommodations for testing or lectures, please let me know. It is the student’s responsibility to contact Disabled Student Services and make special arrangements.

In Class Conduct:

- Cell phones, beepers, video games, and MP3 players will be turned off during class.
- Computers may be used in class for the sole purpose of taking notes. No instant messaging, no game playing, web surfing, or completing of other assignments during class. If you wish to do these things – take it somewhere else. These activities are disrespectful and disrupt both the instructor and your fellow classmates.
- Students will not speak out of turn in class, or be disrespectful towards other students or the instructor.
- Failure to abide by any of these rules of conduct will result in dismissal from the course.

Communications:

If you need to reach me, send me an email (marcy.lascano@csulb.edu). I'm online often, and can usually respond within 24 hours (often much sooner). You may also come by my office or call my office for brief questions. For longer discussions regarding course readings or examinations, please come to my office hours or contact me to make an appointment.

University Withdrawal Policies

For information on withdrawing from courses, please see the current University policy:

<http://www.csulb.edu/depts/enrollment/registration/details.html#anchor1>

Cheating:

Any instance of cheating will result in a grade of 'F' for the course – no exceptions. The most prevalent form of cheating is plagiarism. Plagiarism is the misrepresentation of another individual's work as one's own. In short, plagiarism is a form of dishonesty. Don't be dishonest. See the formal CSULB definitions of cheating and plagiarism below.

University Definition of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the act of using the ideas or work of another person or persons as if they were one's own, without giving credit to the source. Such an act is not plagiarism if it is ascertained that the ideas were arrived at through independent reasoning or logic or where the thought or idea is common knowledge.

Acknowledgment of an original author or source must be made through appropriate references, i.e., quotation marks, footnotes, or commentary. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the following: the submission of a work, either in part or in whole, completed by another; failure to give credit for ideas, statements, facts or conclusions which rightfully belong to another; in written work, failure to use quotation marks when quoting directly from another, whether it be a paragraph, a sentence, or even a part thereof; or close and lengthy paraphrasing of another's writing or programming. A student who is in doubt about the extent of acceptable paraphrasing should consult the instructor.

Students are cautioned that, in conducting their research, they should prepare their notes by (a) either quoting material exactly (using quotation marks) at the time they take notes from a source; or (b) departing completely from the language used in the source, putting the material into their own words. In this way, when the material is used in the paper or project, the student can avoid plagiarism resulting from verbatim use of notes. Both quoted and paraphrased materials must be given proper citations.

University Definition of Cheating

Cheating is defined as the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain or aiding another to obtain academic credit for work by the use of any dishonest, deceptive or fraudulent means. Examples of cheating during an examination include, but are not limited to the following: copying, either in part or in whole, from another's test or examination; discussion of answers or ideas relating to the answers on an examination or test unless such discussion is specifically authorized by the instructor; giving or receiving copies of an examination without the permission of the instructor; using or displaying notes, "cheat sheets," or other information or devices inappropriate to the prescribed test conditions, as when the test of competence includes a test of unassisted recall of information, skill, or procedure; or allowing someone other than the officially enrolled student to represent the same. Also included is plagiarism as defined and altering or interfering with the grading procedures.

It is often appropriate for students to study together or to work in teams on projects. However, such students should be careful to avoid the use of unauthorized assistance, and to avoid any implication of cheating, by such means as sitting apart from one another in examinations, presenting the work in a manner which clearly indicates the effort of each individual, or such other method as is appropriate to the particular course.

Lecture Topics, Readings, Assignments, and Exams

Mon 8/22	Introduction to the course, syllabus, The Early Modern Period
Wed 8/24	Discussion of Research Project/Research Methods in Philosophy
Mon 8/29	God – René Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditation 5; Isaac Newton General Scholium <i>Principia</i> and Query 31 to <i>Opticks</i> ; Emilie du Châtelet, Chapter Two <i>Foundations of Physics</i> .
Wed 8/31	God – G. W. Leibniz, <i>Summary of Arguments from Theodicy</i>
Mon 9/5	No Class – Labor Day Holiday
Wed 9/7	God – Hume “Of Miracles” Research Project Part A Deadline
Mon 9/12	God/Substance – Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> Book I
Wed 9/14	Substance – Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditation II

Mon 9/19	No Class – Instructor at Conference
Wed 9/21	Substance –Anne Conway, <i>Principles</i> III and V, selections Research Project Part B Deadline
Mon 9/26	Human Beings – Descartes, <i>Meditations on First Philosophy</i> , Meditation 6
Wed 9/28	Human Beings – Elisabeth/Descartes Correspondence Selections; Conway, <i>Principles</i> IX
Mon 10/3	Human Beings – Conway, <i>Principles</i> VI Exam 1 handed out
Wed 10/5	No Class – Work on Exam 1
Mon 10/10	Causation – Cavendish, “Argumental Discourse” from <i>Observations Upon Experimental Philosophy</i> , and <i>Philosophical Letters</i> , 4.VI. ; Leibniz <i>New System</i> Exam 1 Due
Wed 10/12	Causation – Hume, <i>Enquiry</i> Section IV Research Project Part C Deadline
Mon 10/17	Personal Identity – Locke, <i>Essay</i> Book II, Ch. XXVII
Wed 10/19	Personal Identity/Love – Cavendish, Selections on Personal Identity and Love
Mon 10/24	Love – Conway, Selections on Love
Wed 10/26	Love – Mary Astel, <i>Letters Concerning the Love of God</i> , Letters 8 & 9; Damaris Masham, <i>Discourse Concerning the Love of God</i> , selections Exam 2 handed out
Mon 10/31	No Class - Work on Exam 2
Wed 11/2	Death – Montaigne “To Philosophize is to Prepare for Death” Exam 2 Due
Mon 11/7	Death – Spinoza, <i>Ethics</i> Book 5
Wed 11/9	“Perspective” - Voltaire, <i>Micromegas</i>
Mon 11/14	Free will – Locke, <i>Essay</i> , Book II, Ch. XXI
Wed 11/16	Free Will – Emilie du Châtelet on “On Liberty”
Mon 11/21	No Class – Fall Break
Wed 11/23	No Class – Fall Break
Mon 11/28	No Class – Instructor at Conference
Wed 11/30	Happiness – Descartes/Elisabeth Correspondence Selections on Happiness Research Project Part D Deadline
Mon 12/5	Happiness – Mary Astell, <i>The Christian Religion</i> , Sections 11-16; Leibniz, “Felicity”
Mon 12/7	Happiness – Emilie du Châtelet, <i>Discourse on Happiness</i> Exam 3 handed out

Monday, December 12th at 12:30 PM: TAKE HOME EXAM 3 & RESEARCH PROJECT DUE

Philosophy 204 – Research Project

This research project is an encyclopedia style paper that will provide information about figures in the early modern period. The project has several components, each worth a certain number of points. Ultimately, each student will produce an entry on a figure that includes biographical information, bibliographical information, and philosophical content.

Assignment & Timeline:

(A) 10 Points: Pick your philosophical figure (due by Wednesday, September 7th at 2:00PM). There are numerous philosophical figures in our time period that are not covered in our class. **You must submit the name of a philosopher to me – philosophers are given on a first come/first serve basis.** I will keep a master list of the people already assigned. There are several criteria for selection:

1. The person cannot be a person we are covering in the course.
2. The person in question must fall into our time period. They must have been born between 1400 and 1800.
3. The person must have some published (accessible) philosophical works (monographs, articles, letters, etc.)

* Make certain to do a little bit of preliminary research on the person's philosophical views. You want to pick someone that you find interesting since you will have to read some of their work!

Ways to go about it: You can do Google searches for early modern philosophers, of course. In addition, you might check the footnotes and indexes of websites, encyclopedia entries, or textbooks. There you will find people who corresponded with or are mentioned by other philosophers.

When you have the name of a philosopher which you are interested in, send me an email with (A) your full name and student number, (B) the philosopher's name, and (C) the philosopher's dates (birth and death). I will reply with an email letting you know if you can continue with this person or not. If not, you must find another person before the due date!

(B) 20 Points: Biographical Information (due by Wednesday, September 21st at 2:00PM). You are now ready to start your research. You will need to provide a brief overview of your philosopher's life (no more than 500 words). In order to do this, you will need to gather information about them. Here's what you need to do for this portion.

1. Find biographical information about this person. You may use the web, books, or articles. However, you must cite **all** your sources. This means that even if you do not use quotes from a web source or book, you must still list it in your bibliography. **You must use at least 2 source materials.**
2. Write up your biography on your wiki page. Be certain to cite your sources- you can do this in a "secondary source" list (see the Elisabeth example on Beachboard).
3. Turn in a copy of your bibliography to the Dropbox on Beachboard before the due date.

(C) 20 Points: Bibliographical Information (due by Wednesday, October 12th at 2:00PM). Provide a primary and secondary source list for your philosopher. Here you will need to provide a list of the primary sources (that is, any books, articles, etc. written by the philosopher in question) and a list of secondary source materials (books, articles, webpages, etc. written about your philosopher).

1. Find bibliographical information. You may use the web, books, or articles. However, you must indicate where you are getting your information. **You must include all the primary materials written by your philosopher and must include at least ten secondary source.**
2. Turn in your Bibliography to the appropriate Dropbox on Beachboard before the due date.

(D) 25 Points: Philosophical Views (Due Wednesday, November 30th at 2:00PM). Now you will write 500 words about the philosophical views of the person that you have chosen.

1. You will now need to read about your figure's philosophical views and decide which of their views you can summarize.
2. Pick one topic that your figure addresses, such as free will, personal identity, the mind-body relationship, ontology, arguments for the existence of God, the nature of God, the nature of time or space, idealism, materialism, causation, accounts of knowledge, skepticism, love, happiness, death etc.
3. Write up a clear and concise summary of the view. Include quotations from their work in order to back up your claims. Be certain to cite the works from which your quotations and claims are taken with footnotes or endnotes.
4. Turn in a copy to the Dropbox on Beachboard before the assignment is due.

(E) 25 Points: Criticism and Evaluation (Due December 12th, 12:30 PM)

Next, you will provide an evaluation and criticism of the philosophical views of the philosopher. Here, you will need to:

- (1) Clearly state what part of the view you are criticizing.
 - (2) Present your criticism in a way that makes it clear why the view is flawed.
 - (3) Present your reasons or evidence for the criticism.
- (4) Finalize your draft:** Put all the parts of your work together (see the Elisabeth example on Beachboard). **Your final draft is due at the beginning of our final examination period. You will turn in a hardcopy to me at this time.**